



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

SHELDON-HART MOUNTAIN REFUGES
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LAKEVIEW, OREGON 97630



SHELDON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION MEMORANDUM

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that:

changes in approved procedures for disposition of feral horses and burros captured on Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge

are categorically excluded from further documentation requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act consistent with guidance provided in 516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1.4. The applicable Categorical Exclusion is 516 DM 6 Appendix 1.4A (1): "Changes or amendments to an approved action when such changes have no or minor environmental impact."

The proposed feral horse removal project was approved as part of the Badger Fire Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Plan and the Environmental Compliance Documents included therein. In addition, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved the Sheldon Horse Management Plan and Environmental Impact Assessment in 1977 and further validated feral horse management on the refuge in the Final EIS and Record of Decision for the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge Renewable Natural Resources Management Plan in 1980.

This feral horse removal project is consistent with the later two documents with the exception of the methods provided for disposition of captured animals. The Sheldon Horse Management Plan and Renewable Natural Resources Management Plan and their associated NEPA documents all provide for sale of captured horses through public auction and disposal of any unsold horses on the refuge in a humane manner. However, social values regarding treatment of feral horses and burros have changed significantly since the Sheldon horse management plan and management plans were approved. Many wild horse protection groups and animal rights groups will not accept disposal of horses through unrestricted auction because of the potential for animals to be slaughtered for the meat market. Humane euthanasia on the refuge is also not acceptable to these groups. In an effort to be responsive to these values in this current horse removal program, the Service has chosen to take all reasonable steps to provide for humane capture and disposition of feral horses. As a result, the contractor chosen to carry out this project will be required to

arrange for adoption or otherwise provide for disposition of the horses captured in a manner that prevents slaughter for the meat market to the maximum extent possible and also prevents humane on-site euthanasia except in cases of debilitating injury or disease.

The differences between the methods of disposition provided for in the original plans and the methods provided for in this project are minor and are intended to minimize or mitigate adverse effects to horses that are less acceptable to the public now than they were when the original plans were approved.

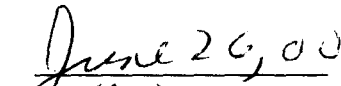
Supporting documents:

Sheldon Horse Management Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Finding of No Significant Impact; approved November 1977.

Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge Renewable Natural Resources Management Plan, Final EIS, and Record of Decision; approved August 1980.

Badger Fire, Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Action Memorandum, approved October 1999.


(Project Leader)


(date)